Republic of Botswana

Ministry of Environment,
Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism

HISTORICAL TIMELINE:
CHOBE – WHERE TIMELESS AFRICA COMES TOGETHER

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June 2021

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BDF	Botswana Defence Force
CDC	Colonial Development Corporation
DC	District Commissioner
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (lit. Liberation Front of Mozambique)
ICJ	International Court of Justice
KAZA	Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PMU	Police Mobile Unit
RNLB	Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau
RSF	Rhodesia Security Forces
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UDI	Uniliteral Declaration of independence
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army

MOTAKI

Written and Compiled by Dr Jeff Ramsay -
Lead Historian and Researcher for Motaki Pty Ltd

The 2021 opening of the Kazungula Bridge between Botswana and Zambia opened a new chapter in the history of the Chobe District as a commercial and transport hub. Over the centuries the area has served as a crossroads linking the wealth of central and southern Africa across the Chobe and Zambezi rivers. It has thus evolved as a meeting place of unique cultural diversity as well as natural wonders. This diversity was reflected in a 1970 ethnographic survey, which recorded members of 23 different ethno-linguistic groups present in the district out of a population of just above 5000.[1]

Deep past

Humanity's Roots

Southern Africa is widely believed by scientists to have been the cradle of humankind. A 2019 study based on DNA findings along with archaeological findings has gone further to suggest that some 200,000 years ago the Chobe region was part of a vast wetland covering much of modern Botswana, which was the ancestral home of all living humans.

Migration of earliest humans (Picture courtesy of the Nature magazine)

An oasis in an otherwise parched expanse of Africa this swathe of land south of the Zambezi River may have sustained an isolated, founder population of modern humans before their northward migration into East Africa and beyond some 130,000 years ago. The extensive existence of middle and late stone age artifacts throughout the region certainly bears material testament to the presence of human occupation over tens of thousands of years.[2]

Ancient Rock Art

In addition to ancient tools, early humans have left an artistic legacy in the form of rock paintings in northern Botswana, which includes those located among the Gubatshaa Hills overlooking the Savuti Marsh area in the Chobe National Park. These paintings were produced by local Khoe (Khoisan speakers/Basarwa) over many generations dating back at least as far as the 6th century, with the

latest paintings having been produced at the beginning of the 19th century. The style of many of the surviving paintings is similar to the larger and more ancient collection of rock art located at the Tsodilo Hills World Heritage site in Botswana's North-West District, adjacent to Chobe.

Khoe Speakers

Today, people of Khoe heritage continue to make up a significant proportion of Chobe's indigenous population. Although commonly associated with hunter-gather lifestyles, having long benefited from the region's celebrated abundance of flora and fauna, modern Khoe populations in the region have adapted to other urban and rural opportunities, while nonetheless preserving their unique culture within the region's demographic mosaic. These include Shua-Khoe who are concentrated in the Kasane-Kazungula-Lesoma area. Other Khoe groups found in the wider region have been identified linguistically //Ani, /Anda, Buga, Danisi, Kxoe Tuyea, and Ts'ixa.[4]

Iron Age Trade

By the beginning of the first millennium or common era 2000 years ago late stone age culture had begun to give way to early iron age settlement associated with the introduction of arable and pastoral agriculture, which was accompanied by the emergence of new peoples into the region. Prominent among these was a community that thrived from the 13th through 15th centuries along the banks of the Chobe at Nyungwe, which is located between modern Kasane and Kazungula townships. Recent excavations have revealed that the site is rich in tools, pottery, and other artifacts.

Pottery fragments excavated from the Nyungwe site.

Among these are the remains of female figurines made of fired clay, which are notable for their depiction of intricate hairstyles. Besides its wealth of locally manufactured objects, the Nyungwe site is notable for also containing cowrie and other seashells of Indian Ocean origin. The existence of such shells suggests that the settlement was linked to trade routes possibly leading to the Atlantic as well as Indian Oceans.[5]

Bantu Speakers

The Nyungwe site is associated with the rise of Bantu-speaking communities in the region. The largest such group found in the district today is the Vekuhane, who are also known to outsiders as Basubiya. Vekuhane are also concentrated in other parts of Botswana, including Gumare in Ngamiland and the Boteti sub-district around Rakops, as well as in Namibia and Zambia. In terms of language and heritage, the Vekhuhane are related to other Ila-Tonga groups in the region.

Other Bantu ethno-linguistic groups found in and around the Chobe District include smaller numbers of Bakalanga, Matotela, Maschi, Mafwe, Matoka, Wayeyi, Bakgalagari, and Hambukushu. During the 19th century considerable numbers of Malozi ("Barotse", Aluyi), Makololo (Bafokeng bagaPatsa), Batswana (Batawana and Bangwato), and Amandebele have migrated in and out of the area.[6]

Realm of Intenge

During the 1600s Vekuhane settlement in the middle Zambesi-Chobe-Linyanti region had led to the establishment of Intenge polity under a ruler named Ikuhane who was the son of Intenge. According to some accounts, the group had migrated from the upper Zambesi into the region during the time of Ikuhane who was forced to flee with his subjects from Aluya, the ancestors of today's Malozi.

His people thereafter identified themselves as Vekuhane, and their language as Chikuhane, while referring to the Chobe-Linyandi as the Ikuhane river. Ikuhane is said to have been succeeded by Lilundu-Lituu, followed by the female ruler Mwale and Shanjo or Singongi. During this early period, the Vekuhane were both matrilineal and matrilocal in their social organisation.[7]

Goha Confederacy

Some local traditions maintain that during Shanjo's reign Vekuhane` lived together with Wayeyi and Lilebe's Hambukushu in the Goha or Gcoha Hills (located in the District about 40 kilometres south of Pakarungu). The three communities are reported to have come together to escape the raids of the notable seventeenth-century Aluya ruler Mwanambinyi. Shanjo died while leading his people from Goha to the Linyandi marshlands, where he was succeeded by a son, perhaps actually a biological nephew named Mafwira I, who due to his unpopularity was soon deposed by a junior brother named Nsundano.[8]

The Peeler

Munitengwe Nsundano I is also widely remembered by his praise name Liberenge, meaning "the Peeler". This is shortened from his longer praise "Nsundano, Liberenge, Chisunda manyika, wakasundenkanda nebuta" - "Nsundano, the Peeler, the Pusher of countries, who pushed away countries with an arrow." Both names reflect Nsundano's reputation as a war leader who captured many cattle while attempting to defend Intenge's borders against further incursions by Matoka and Aluya.

Arrival of the Makololo

The modern history of the Vekuhane and their neighbours can be said to have begun during the reign of Munitengwe Liswani I, whose rule coincided with the arrival of the Makololo of Sebetwane into the region. In c.1835 Sebetwane, having already conquered and captured large numbers of Batawana, settled at Naliele (or Nalolo in Western Zambia) and later Linyandi, from where over the next two decades he acted as overlord ruling much of the middle Zambezi as well as northern Botswana.

Liswane was thus forced to act as Sebetwane's subordinate. From his base at Kazungulu, Liswani I co-operated with Sebetwane by providing him with boats (mekoro) with which the latter crossed the Chobe and Zambesi rivers to conquer the lands of the Matoka, Maila, and Aluya. The Makololo made the Aluya their vassals while calling them Barotsi or Malozi.[9]

Executions of Liswani and Kuratau

Varying accounts agree that Liswani subsequently fell out with Sebetwane, resulting in him seeking refuge and alliance with the Amandebele of Mzilikazi. After the Amandebele withdrew from the region, Sebetwane is said to have made overtures to Liswani to visit Naliele and make peace.

Against the advice of his subjects, Liswani took up the offer only to be treacherously executed by Sebetwane following his arrival. Thereafter Sebetwane placed Liswani's nephew Nonkwena on the throne, who thereafter ruled as Munitengwe Liswani II.

Accounts of the execution of Liswani I dovetail with the fate of another local ruler killed by Sebetwane, a Wayeyi induna named Kuratau. According to Wayeyi sources, Kuratau had also facilitated the Makololo in crossing the Chobe-Linyandi only to be murdered so he would not be able to assist any others.[10]

Sebetwane's Kingdom

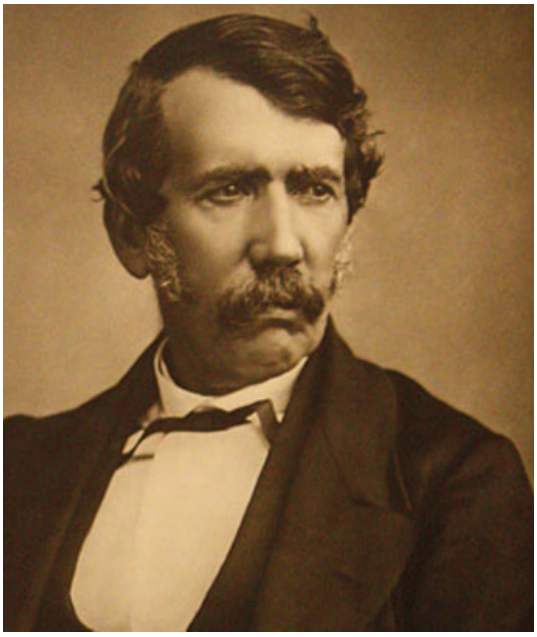
In his later years, Sebetwane ruled from Linyandi village, while Liswani II remained as a Makololo vassal at Impalila island. There he was under the direct authority of a Makololo induna named Isuswa, who stayed at the village of the same name. Other prominent Makololo indunas placed over Vekuhane, whose place-names survive include Banyai, Mukumba, Kabulabula, Mutwametzi, Kwenani, and Sebetwane's son and successor Sekeletu, who stayed at Sesheke.

In 1840 Sebetwane's kingdom was weakened when many Batawana escaped from Makololo captivity, and return to Ngamiland via Chobe. Thereafter, under the leadership of Kgosi Letsholathebe I, they emerged as powerful regional rivals to the Makololo.[11]

Arrival of Europeans (1800s)

From the mid-1800s - ivory, skins, and ostrich feathers from Chobe were traded for guns, wagons, and other articles from the Cape. The known European presence in the Zambesi-Linyanti region dates back to David Livingstone's well-publicised 1851 expedition with William Oswell and George Fleming to Sebetwane, who was then residing at Linyandi. The expedition had been organised at the invitation of the then venerable Mokololo ruler. Observing how Letsholathebe and other Batswana rulers to his south were gaining power by trading ivory and other game products for guns in 1850 Sebetwane sent out three parties of emissaries. One brought 13 brown cows to Letsholathebe, another 13 black cows to the Bakwena ruler Sechele, and a third 13 white cows to the Bangwato ruler Sekgoma.

Accompanying each of these gifts was a request that the road to the Makololo also be opened to the Europeans in return for access to the hunting grounds in Chobe. While Sekgoma was initially reluctant, Sechele backed by Letsholathebe, proved eager to forge a partnership with Sebetwane through his missionary, David Livingstone. Previously Sechele had arranged for Livingstone, along with the well-to-do gentleman hunter William Oswell and African American former slave named George Fleming to "discover" Lake Ngami by accompanying a party of Bakwena into Ngamiland. It was through such indigenous agency that Livingstone's career as Victorian Britain's most celebrated African explorer was launched.[12]



David Livingstone

1851 Death of Sebetwane; Exploration of Chobe and middle Zambezi

In 1851 Livingstone, once more joined by Oswell and Fleming, arrived at Linyandi just weeks before the great Mokololo's death on July 7th. Thereafter, the trio explored the region north of the Zambezi River. While Livingstone remained behind at Sesheke, Oswell, apparently accompanied by Fleming, proceeded from the confluence of the river they labelled Chobe eastward along the Zambezi, only turning back after spotting the spray of Mosi-oa-Thunya or Victoria Falls. This was just over four years before their supposed discovery by Livingstone in November 1855.[13]

Meaning of "Linyandi" and "Chobe"

The names Linyandi and Chobe are both said to have been specific place names whose current status as alternative appellations for a common river can be traced back to the mapping of Livingstone and Oswell.

Linyanti

Linyanti, which may be translated as "a place I will suffer and die", was the name given by the Makololo to Sebetwane's settlement and adjacent marshes due to the large number of people who perished in the area largely due to malaria.[14]

Chobe[1]

The origin of the name Chobe is more problematic. According to Livingstone, Chobe was what the Makololo called the river. It was thus so labelled in the initial maps produced by Oswell and Livingstone, that were the basis for William Cooley's ground-breaking 1852 "Map of Africa South of the Equator", as well as the early maps of Charles Andersson and Francis Galton. Notwithstanding its prominence in the Cooley map and popular writings of Livingstone, other early European visitors in the region such as James Chapman, Thomas Bains, and Frederick Selous were adamant in their observations that Chobe was not an accurate local name for the river, but rather referred to a specific place possibly linked at one time to a certain individual.[15] In this context, Selous noted that the name meant nothing in any of the local languages of the region.

The name Chobe does, however, appear in a Vekuhane folktale about a cursed place entitled "Chobe-chobe". In the tale "chobe, chobe" is the onomatopoeia rendering the haunting sound made by a bird to a man who had committed incest with his sister. Despite repeatedly slaying the bird continues to appear, ultimately revealing the man's crime to his fellow villages leading to his death at a place thereafter known a Chobe. Stories of such haunting or revelation birds exposing wickedness are a common feature in the region's Bantu folklore.[16]

Fall of the Makololo

Following Sebetwane's death, the Makololo kingdom steadily declined during the reign of his son Sekeletu, who had succeeded his father following a brief regency by his elder sister Dikuku or MmaMotsisane (Mamochisane). Sekeletu suffered from leprosy, becoming a recluse, while many of his father's original followers died of malaria at Linyanti.

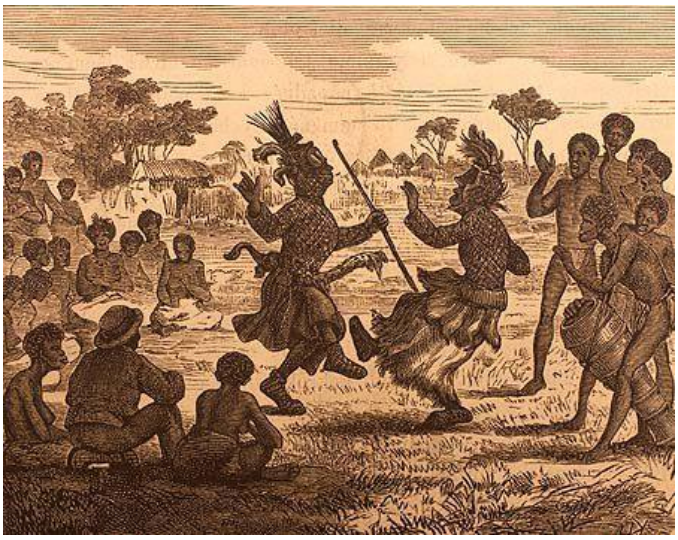
A Makololo general named Mpololo tried to assume power following Sekeletu's death in 1863, but, his heavy-handed attempt to suppress the Malozi led to a wider uprising under the leadership of Njekwa. Unlike the Matoka, the Vekuhane are not known to have played any significant role in the 1864 rebellion. Most of the Makololo men were either killed or fled as refugees to the Batawana, though the majority of their women and children remained behind, becoming part of the new Malozi social order. While the Makololo kingdom itself was ultimately short-lived much of its political structures, as well as language, survived.

Among the Vekuhane, Makololo introduced patrilineal inheritance, which began to supersede older matrilineal customs. This shift was consolidated as a result of subsequent Malozi and Batswana influence

1850-60s Christianity and Commerce

In 1853 Livingstone returned to the Chobe, once more accompanied by Fleming, who had now set himself up as a pioneering independent trader. To better explore the Chobe and Zambezi Livingstone used a metal pontoon, the first of its kind in the region, which he received as a gift from William Frederick Webb a wealthy sportsman who along with his colleague William Codrington, travelled to Botswana on furlough from the British army to hunt big game.[17] Earlier Livingstone had nursed the pair after they had been discovered by Bakwena suffering from fever and thirst in the Kalahari.

Throughout the 19th century, Cape Town was a popular resting place for British officers travelling to and from India, with many making arrangements with Sechele and other local rulers to hunt and trade in the region. By the 1860's the middle Zambezi region, including Chobe, was becoming a major area of commercial ivory hunting by both Europeans and Africans, while slave traders linked to the Portuguese ports on the Angolan coast remained a threat.



The Vekuhane and neighbouring middle Zambezi communities have rich traditions of dance and music. Below is an engraving of Kishi dancers, published by Dr. Emil Holub in 1881.

It was to stem this scourge that Livingstone sought an alliance with the Makololo to promote his vision of Christianity and legitimate commerce in the region. It was in this context that an attempt was made in 1860 by the London Missionary Society (LMS) to establish a station among the Makololo at Linyandi, which however failed largely due to disease.

In the 1880s the Roman Catholic Jesuit order that a mission be built at Mpandamatenga, but it was subsequently abandoned. Thereafter the Paris Evangelical Mission, followed by the LMS became active in the area.[18]

1864 Establishment of Malozi (Barotse) Kingdom

In 1864 the Makololo ruling class was overthrown by an internal revolt by the Malozi who were heirs to the region's earlier Aluya rulers. In this context, Sipopa (below) was installed as the new Malozi Lintungu or King. Sipopa had previously grown up as a privileged member of Sebetwane's court, before escaping from Sekeletu to establish himself as an independent ruler on the upper Zambesi before the rebellion. His reign lasted from 1864 until 1876.

The Malozi kingdom was governed by a sophisticated aristocratic order which survived into the colonial era. At the top was the King or Lintunga assisted by a traditional Prime Minister known as the Ngambele. The Litunga ruled through a Kuta or court at the capital Lealui, whose membership

included a nobility made up of indunas and commoners. The Lintunga was assisted by a cabinet that was appointed from distinguished commoners as well as the indunas.

In addition, the state had a parallel junior dynasty of the Mulena Mukwea (Mokwe) of Nalalo, which had its own indunas posted at various places throughout the kingdom. While the royal Kuta was the senior political and judicial forum of the land most of the day-to-day administration was carried out through junior Kuta at the provincial, district or silalo, village, and sub-village level.[19]

1870s Litia at Kazungula

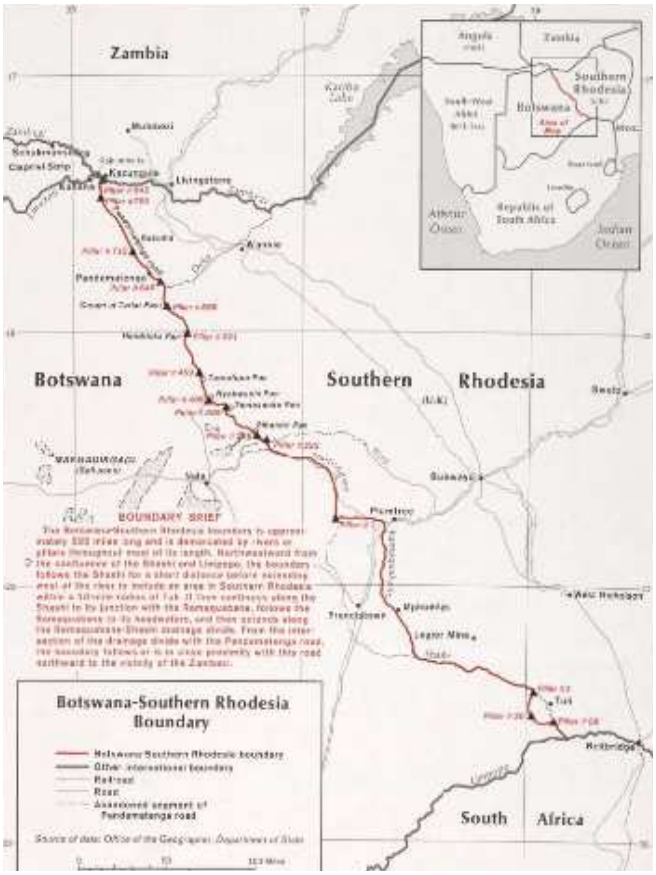
Lintunga Lewainika posted his senior son and heir Litia at Kazungula on the north bank of the Zambezi to act as his deputy throughout most of the Zambesi-Chobe-Linyanti. There he enjoyed senior status but shared authority with Mukwea, with each authority having interspersed subjects under its direct authority. This arrangement continued after 1893 when Litia moved his Kuta to Mwandi adjacent to Mukwea's at (old) Sesheke.

As a result of this power-sharing arrangement, many of the silalo or sub-districts were jointly governed by two indunas, one directly under Litia and the other under Mukwea. On occasion members of the two regional Kuta would meet together under Litia chairmanship.

1871-88 Westbeach and the Hunters Road

From 1871 to 1888 trade with Malozi was largely monopolised by George Cobb Westbeech, along with such sometimes partners George Blockley and Benjamin Bradshaw. By 1872 Westbeech had established his trading post at Mpandamatenga, where he was looked upon by the Malozi as their local induna. Westbeech's success has been attributed to his ability to forge cordial relations with regional rulers, most notably the Amandebele King Lobengula and Balozi Kings Sipopa and his successor Lewanika.

In the later court, he became known as 'Joros Umutunta', i.e. 'Great George', and was ultimately regarded



The Hunter's Road shown in red

by Lewanika as a trusted induna. Between 1871 and 1881 Westbeech established the "Hunters' Road" trade route from Tati/Francistown to Lesoma, along with a network of trading posts that in addition to Mpandamatenga included stores at Lesoma, Kazungula, and Sesheke and in Malozi country.

In 1881-82 Westbeech further extended his road from Lesoma to the banks of the Zambezi, terminating 27 yards east of a large Muzungula or Sausage Tree, a landmark which then stood about a quarter-mile east of the confluence of the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers. Prior to this development wagons from the south had generally stopped at Lesoma, where they were offloaded with their goods being portered to the river for crossing. The Hunters Road was subsequently used to demarcate the Botswana-Zimbabwe border. Westbeech died in 1888.[20]

George Westbeech (right) with King Lobengula of the Ndebele (Picture courtesy of the Africana Museum, Joburg).

1876 Liswani II Flees to Boteti

The emergence of the Malozi kingdom coincided with the break-up of the Vekuhane monarchy. Towards the end of Sipopo's reign in 1876 Munitengwe Liswani II, along with most of his followers, fled from his long-time residence at Impalira Island to the Gammangwato polity of modern Botswana.

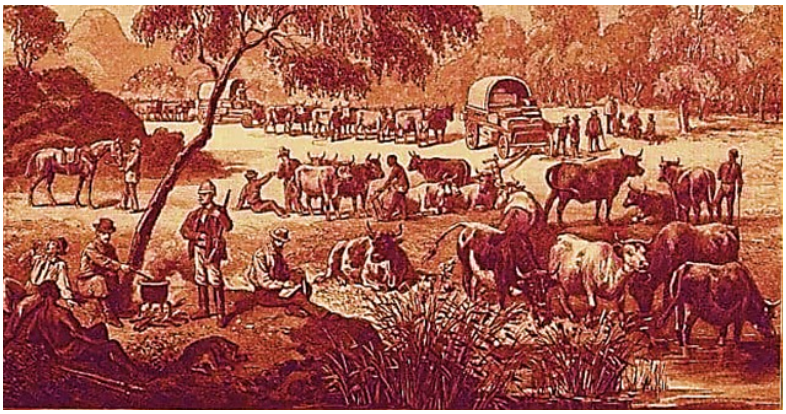
The Bangwato ruler, Kgosi Khama III, settled the Vekuhane refugees at Tsienyane on the Boteti River near Rakops. At the time Liswani II is said to have feared that Sipopo planned to have him assassinated and replaced by either Chika or Maiba, sons of Liswani I. By this time Liswani II traditional claims to the throne were being destabilized by the shift from matrilineal to patrilineal descent. After Liswani II's flight, his sister Ntolwe remained as a sub-chief at Isuswa. Her son, Mwanamwali succeeded her as the senior Vekuhane ruler in the Malozi kingdom.

Vekuhane Royal Breakup

Following Liswani II's flight, competing claims to the position of Munitenge were fueled by the community's shift from matrilineal to patrilineal descent, which apparently came about due to both internal and external pressure, as well as the emergence of colonial boundaries. Despite Liswani II suspicions, both Maiba and Chika settled with him at Tsienyane until on or about the time of his death in 1901. Maiba then went to Isuswa in the Eastern Caprivi, where he absorbed those followers of Ntolwe who remained their after Mwanamwali relocated to Sesheke. For his part Chika moved to Mahabe before settling at Munga, where he sought to establish his own claims as Munitenge, now calling himself Liswani III. While Chika/Liswani III's authority was accepted by many Vekuhane it was rejected by Liswani II's two sons Mafwira II, who then ruled over a Vekuhane section at Tlhale near Gumare, and Sinvula Nonkwena, as well as the followers of Maiba and Mwanamwali.

Following Chika's death, Sinvula Nonkwena was called to takeover at Munga. Some members of the community, however, migrated to Satau under Chika's son Chika III, who from 1927 to 1954 was recognised as the senior royal at Parakarungu as well as Satau. After Chika III's death Satau came under the authority of Sinvula Nonkwena, but the rulers at Parakarungu continued to assert their independent dynastic claims. Sinvula Nonkwena died in 1968 and was succeeded in January 1969 by Moffat Maiba II Sinvula, who has since ruled from Kavimba.[21]

Dr. Emil Holub



Dr. Emil Holub's 1884-86 Austro-Hungarian Expedition at Kazungula

1884-86 German and Austro-Hungarian Expeditions

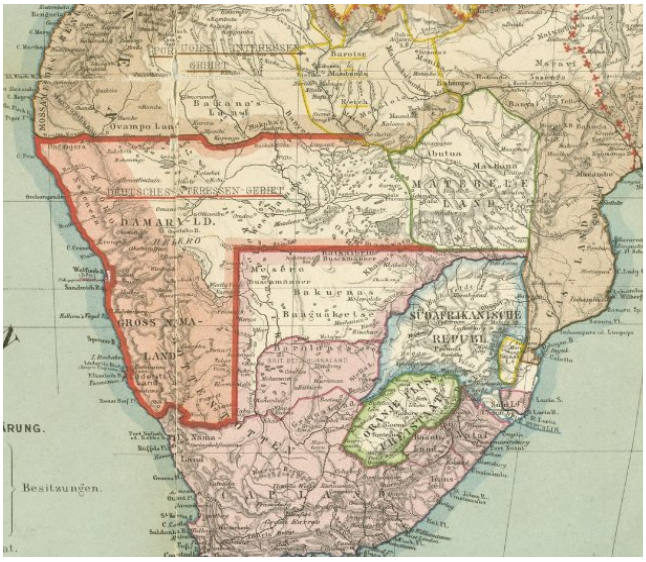
While most of the region's nineteenth-century European visitors were either British or Boers (Afrikaners), other nationalities were also represented. The earliest prominent German "explorers" in the area were A. Hammar and A. Schultz, who journeyed along the south bank of the Chobe river in 1884 and Dr. Emil Holub's 1884-86 Austro-Hungarian Expedition of the same year. Both expeditions produced publications that brought further outside popular attention to the region.[22]

1884 Pontoon at Kazungula

As part of his 1884-86 Austro-Hungarian mission to the Zambezi, Dr. Emil Holub brought a prefabricated metal pontoon, supplied by the Austrian military, overland in three parts, which he assembled at Kazungula. After first using it to travel to Mosi-oa-tunya Holub sold the boat to Westbeech. Thereafter it became the first metal pontoon to serve as a ferry at Kazungula. Previously ferrying in the area had been done exclusively by mekoro.

The Kazungula Ferry continued to operate after Westbeech's death. In 1907 Bechuanaland Police Captain Eason would thus observe that:

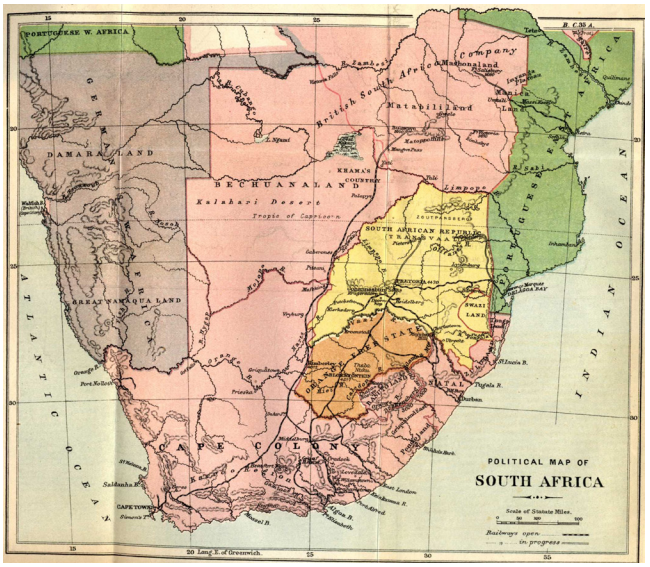
> "The first and only wagon road from Lushuma to the North is the present one said to have been cut by Westbeech, which follows down the valley to a spot on the right bank of the Zambezi opposite the village of Kazungula. This is about a quarter-mile below what appears to be the true junction of the Linyandi and Zambezi Rivers and is where the Kazungula Ferry has always been and is about 27 yds. East of a large "Mzungula" tree standing on the right bank of the Zambezi…."[23]



Anglo-German Scramble for Chobe (left) 1889 British and (right) 1888 German Map

1885-90 Colonial Partition

As part of the imperial scramble for Africa between 1885 and 1890, the British and German pressed overlapping claims in the region. Their territorial dispute was settled by the wider 1890 Anglo-German Treaty which recognised British authority over Ngamiland and Chobe while conceding the Caprivi Strip to German South West Africa. Before the partition maps from both countries showed Bangwato controlling the south banks of the Chobe and Zambezi to Mosi-oa-tunya.[24]



1890 Anglo-German Agreement establishes Chobe River Boundary

1896-97 Rinderpest

1896-97 - Rinderpest arrives from East Africa and eventually kills about 90 percent of all cattle, along with large numbers of ungulates. Famine ensues through 1898, while Tsetse retreats in Chobe and the Okavango Delta, ultimately opening up the areas for grazing.[25]

Rinderpest killed about 90% of cattle.

1900s

1901-02 British mediate a renewal of the border dispute between Lewanika and Sekgoma, which implicitly took in the Caprivi Strip that lay between their two territories.

1905 Completion of the rail bridge at Victoria Falls diverts much of the commercial traffic away from Hunters Road and Kazungula crossing.

ÉTUDES

LANGUES DU HAUT-ZAMBÈZE

TEXTES ORIGINAUX

PRÉCÉDÉS D'UNE ESQUISSE GRAMMATICALE

E. JACOTTET

TROISIÈME PARTIE

TEXTES LOUYI

CONTES, LÉGENDES, SUPERSTITIONS, Etc. ET VOCABULAIRES

PARIS
ERNEST LEROUX, ÉDITEUR,
28, RUE BONAPARTE (VIe)
1901

The cover of *"Études Sur Les Langues Du Haut-Zambèze"* (*"Studies on the Languages of the Upper Zambezi"*)

1907 Demarcation of Bechuanaland-Southern Rhodesia boundary along Hunters Road.[26]

1909 Arrival of German administration in Eastern Caprivi reportedly results in "remarkable immigration of Marsubias [Vekuhane] which is now taking place from German Territory to our bank of the Chobe"[27]

1896-1902 Jacottet's studies of Chikuhane and Silozi

Between 1996 and 1902 the Swiss missionary the Rev. Edouard Jacottet published a three-volume collection *"Études Sur Les Langues Du Haut-Zambèze"* (*"Studies on the Languages of the Upper Zambezi"*), which provided grammars and extensive folklore collections in Chikuhane and Silozi languages, with French translation.

Surprisingly Jacottet, who was also prolific early publisher of Sesotho, never came to the Chobe-Zambezi region, carrying out his research of Chikuhane and Silozi through his engagement with students from the region at his base in Morija, Lesotho.

1911 After five years, Sekgoma Letsholathebe is released from prison and is allowed to settle in the Chobe, where, in 1912, he is joined by many of his followers from Ngamiland.

Sekgoma Letsholathebe

1912 Batawana Exodus to Chobe

Between 1912 and 1914 nearly half of Ngamiland's population temporarily moved to the Linyanti to join Sekgoma Letsholathebe, whom the British had earlier

deposed as the Chief of the Batawana (Ngamiland) in favour of his nephew Mathiba.[28] Beginning in the 1920s most of these Bo-Sekgoma immigrants returned to their former homes, following the death of the exiled Chief and his immediate heir, though a considerable community of Batawana remains at Kachikau.

1914 Sekgoma Letsholathebe dies is succeeded by David Letsholathebe (1914-17) and Monnamaburu (1917-23), most "BaSekgoma" along with Monnamaburu return to Ngamiland by 1924, but holdouts remain at Kachikau.

1916 Ovambadero Migration

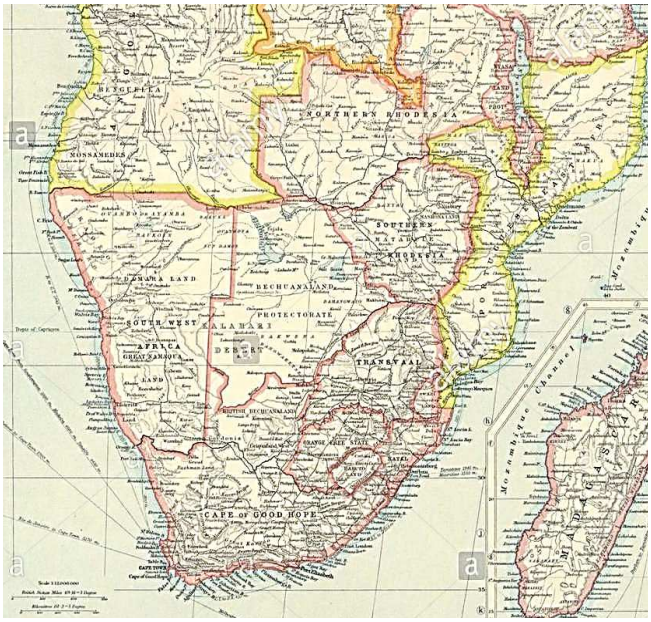
In 1916 the Ovambandero leader Nicodemus Kahememua (d. 1945) resettled at Chobe with his followers by British after petitioning against Batawana Kgosi Mathiba II, but he and his followers were resettled at Boteti in 1922, as the grazing was inadequate at Chobe.

1923-34 Mohumagadi Motshabi Letsholathebe or "MmaKgabo", the elder sister of the late Sekgoma Letsholathebe, rules Batawana at Kachikau. Following her death as she had no heirs more return to Ngamiland.

1914-30 Eastern Caprivi Administered as Part of Chobe

The Eastern Caprivi was occupied by paramilitary police from Southern Rhodesia in September 1914, while the western Caprivi was secured by Bechuanaland Protectorate police and local Batswana under the direction of the British Resident Magistrate for Ngamiland. In November 1914 the High Commissioner provisionally placed the entire Caprivi under the jurisdiction of the Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Until the end of 1929, the western Caprivi was administered from Maun, while the eastern Caprivi was administered from Kazungula-Kasane. In 1930 the entire Caprivi was administratively reintegrated into South African administered South West Africa through the High Commissioner's Caprivi Zipfel Proclamation no. 27 of 1930.



Map showing the borders of Botswana, Namibia, Angola and Zambia before the creation of the Caprivi strip.

1920-30s Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau Activites

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) operated a ferry at Kazungula to encourage labour migrants from Central Africa to work at the nearby Wankie Colliery and other Southern Rhodesia mines. In 1926 five RNLB agents were reported to be stationed at Kazungula.[29]

1920s-1960s Kazungula Cattle Crossing

From the 1920s through to the 1960s Kazungula served as a veterinary inspection and crossing point for Ngamiland cattle exports to Livingstone, from where much of the herds were slaughtered before being exported to the Belgium Congo and Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt. The river crossings were facilitated by tying the cattle to a barge.

An Ngamiland Cattle Exporters Association was formed whose principal member was the Susman Brothers who owned the Ngamiland Trading Company. The Susman's also owned the principal abattoir in Livingstone.

In the 1920s-1960s, Kazungula serves as crossing point for Ngamiland cattle exports to Copperbelt.

Other prominent exporters included the firm of Basher & Kays, and a grouping of Greek Cypriot traders, e.g., the Deaconos brothers and Christos, Orphines brothers, and L.G. Deaconos. By 1949 over 25,000 head of cattle were being annually crossed at Kazungula. Traffic along the Chobe cattle corridor declined from the mid-1950s with the re-opening of the Lobatse abattoir.[30]

1929 Kasane-Maun Road

In preparation for a tour by the High Commissioner in 1929, a dirt road was cut between Kasane and Maun with a fuel depot being established at Tsotsoroga.[31]

1935-54 Chobe Timber Concessions

In 1935 the Susman Brothers began exploiting a timber concession in the northern quarter of the Chobe District with a sawmill and operational headquarters located at Serondella. In 1938 the Susman Brothers ceased their logging operations, subsequently selling their timber rights to what became Chobe Concessions Ltd, which was active in the region from 1944 to 1956. Altogether a total of 6.8 million cubic feet of hardwood, notably Rhodesian mahogany and teak, was extracted from the concession during the period, for which the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government received a total of 44,000 pounds in royalty revenues.

Elle and Harry Susman who ran a flourishing timber trading company in the Chobe region

During the time of the Concessions' operations, Serondella grew into a town of just over 3,000 whose amenities included a cinema, beer hall, and retail outlets, as well as an airstrip. When the sawmill ceased its operations, however, Serondella became a virtual ghost town. It was also a nexus for riverboat traffic with barges taking the cut timber to Livingstone. About 70% of the forestry workforce was recruited from outside the district.[32]

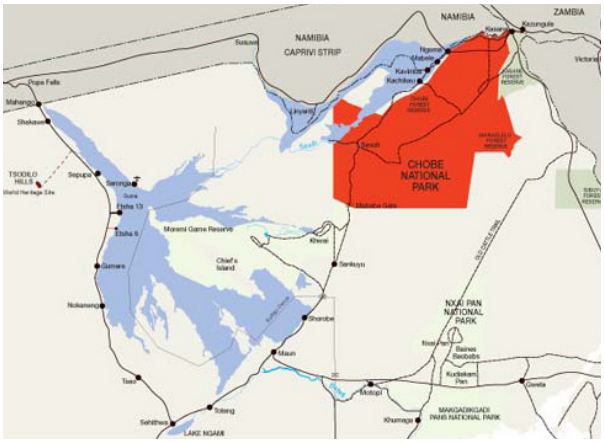
1935-69 WENELA

In 1935 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Recruitment Agency or "Wenela" set up a depot to recruit Central African workers for South African mines, resulting in the creation of the modern village of Kazungula. Wenela subsequently built a school, clinic, and airstrip, while providing river transport services. The importance of the station was, however, reduced after a larger facility was opened at Katima Mulilo in the Caprivi. The Wenela office at Kazungula finally closed in 1969, resulting in many Malozi workers returning to Zambia.[33]

Migrant workers disembarking from WENELA aircraft

1932-68 From Game Protection to Chobe National Park

In 1932 the vast lands of the Chobe District are officially declared as a non-hunting zone by the then Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, who subsequently, but unsuccessfully lobbied for the creation of a large game reserve or park in the Chobe District. Rey's aspiration was only partially realized in 1960 with the creation of Chobe Wildlife Reserve, which was finally gazetted as a national park in 1968.[34]



Chobe National Park (in red) dominates the Chobe district

1940s-50s Early Tourism

During the 1940s-50s small numbers of leisure travellers began to come to Kazungula-Kasane from Livingstone, often attracted to the area's hot springs, as well as flora and fauna. Many camped at Serondella. From 1945 investors showed interest in establishing a hotel in the area, but such a proposal only came to fruition with the 1959 founding of the Chobe River Lodge (now Chobe Safari Lodge). With government support the lodge also in 1960 revived regular ferry service at Kazungula.[35]

1940s Return of Tsetse Fly

During the 1940s tsetse fly once more became prevalent in the Chobe region resulting in a severe decline in local cattle herds.[36]

1950s CDC Ranches

In 1954 the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) financed the reopening of the Lobatse abattoir. Partially to ensure northern cattle farmers sent their cattle to the south the CDC further established ranching along with farming schemes at Mpandamatenga, Bushman Pits, and Nata, which were abandoned by 1958.[37]

1961-1980 Kazungula Freedom Corridor

From 1961, extensive refugee movement across Zambezi River is regulated by local British and subsequent Botswana and Zambian authorities. ANC, PAC, ZAPA, SWAPO, and FRELIMO all make extensive use of the corridor. The 1965 Rhodesian UDI and Botswana's own independence in 1966 were followed in 1966-67 by initial ANC/ZAPU incursions into north-west Rhodesia along the Botswana border, known as the "Wankie Campaign", which ended when a number of freedom fighters, including Chris Hani, fled into Botswana where they handed themselves over to the Police Mobile Unit (PMU).[38]

1968-75 Removal of River settlements inside Chobe Game Park

The creation of the Chobe National Part in 1968 resulted in the decision to remove residents from Serondella and other settlements along the Chobe falling within the park's boundary.

1969 Coronation of Munintenge Maiba II of Vekuhane.

1970 Botswana Zambia Boundary (Quadripoint) Dispute

Around 1968 the idea of constructing a road from Nata to Kazungula and a bridge across the Zambezi River to improve trade between Zambia and Botswana was first discussed by Presidents Sir Seretse Khama and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. The two leaders also agreed to seek financial assistance from the U.S. Government to fund the said road and bridge at Kazungula, which was already a matter of interest to the Americans. Further to the above, on 20 February 1970 in a letter addressed to President Khama the South African Government asserted their objections to the construction of the proposed bridge on the basis that it would be crossing over their territories because Botswana and Zambia did not have a common boundary at Kazungula.

South Africa's position, which was held in collaboration with the then rebel Rhodesia regime, appears to have been motivated by their continued interest to prevent the movement of refugees and freedom fighters in the context of by then escalating Black Nationalist insurgency in the Caprivi as well as Rhodesia. The South African position was rejected by Botswana and Zambia, with American and other international backing, but may have contributed to the postponement of the bridge project for a generation. Instead, construction proceeded during the 1970s on the tarmac road from Francistown to Kazungula, with an enhanced ferry service being introduced in 1979.[39]

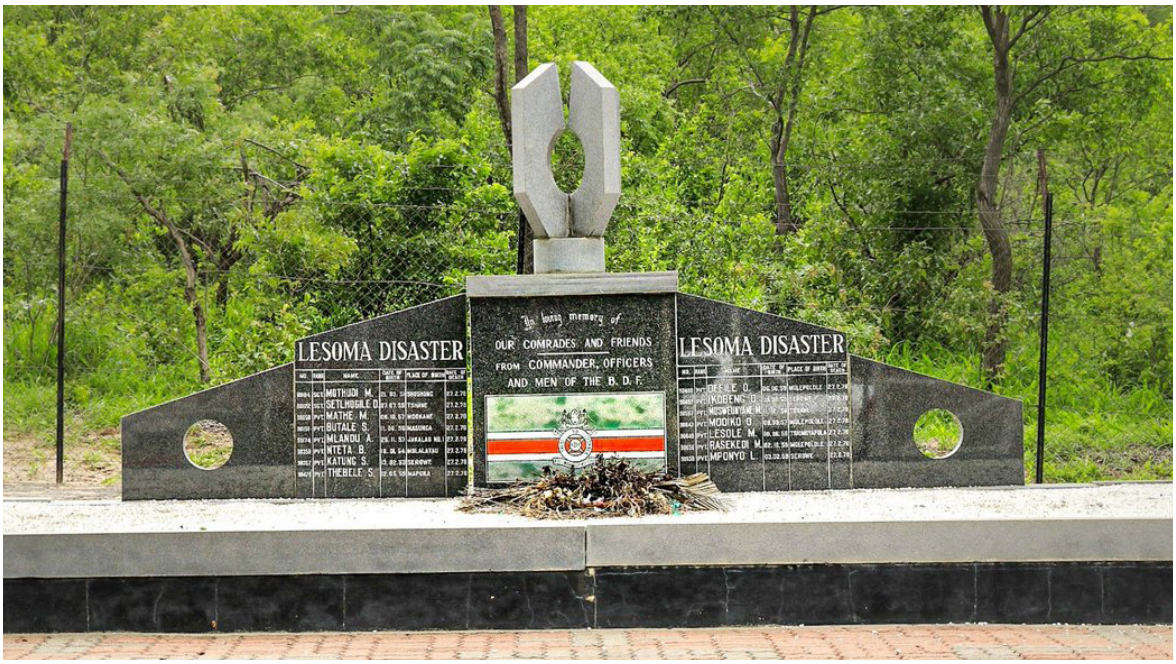
1972 Chobe Game Lodge

In 1972 Chobe Game Lodge, Botswana's first 5-star safari operation opened its doors inside the Chobe National Game Park. The lodge and park were thrust into the international spotlight in 1975 when Hollywood celebrity guests Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton decided to re-marry at the facility.[40]

Then Chobe DC Ambrose Masalila (right) and Chobe Game Lodge manager Fred Knoeses (left) witness wedding ceremony of Richard Burton to Elizabeth Taylor along Chobe river at Kasane in April 1975.

1976-80 Rhodesian Security Force incursions

From 1976 Chobe Region tourism and businesses were hard hit by the spillover of the Zimbabwe Liberation war, with an upsurge in raids by Rhodesian Security Forces. Cross-border incursion by Rhodesian Security forces in the region intensified following the December 1976 declaration by the Smith regime that the Botswana-Rhodesia frontier was a war zone, which they codenamed "Operation Tangent." By December 1977, some 60% of the Kasane workforce had been laid off as tourism and other businesses were badly affected. The growing security threat resulted in the posting of units of the then newly formed BDF at Kazungula. On the evening of February 27, 1978, a detachment of 35 BDF soldiers, 2 teenagers from Lesoma village, and 2 or 3 ZIPRA combatants were ambushed by Smith's Rhodesian Soldiers at Lesoma sand ridge. 15 BDF soldiers, 1 teenager from Lesoma, and a ZIPRA combatant lost their lives in the ensuing firefight. In a 1979 raid, Rhodesian forces destroyed the then-new Kazungula ferry.[41]



Lesoma Monument

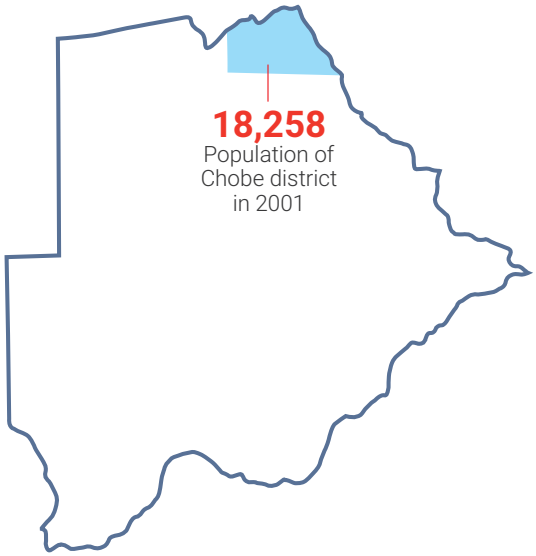
1984 Pandamatenga Farming Project begins.

1991-2000 **Sedudu Island Dispute**

In 1991 Botswana and Namibia began a long-running border dispute over ownership of Sedudu Island in the Chobe River. The case was decided in Botswana's favour by the ICJ in 2000.[42]

Botswana flag at Sedudu.

2000s



2001 Census puts the population of Chobe at 18,258

2006 **Ferry Disaster**

In 2006 one of the Kazungula ferry boats flipped while carrying a brand-new Volvo semi-trailer cattle truck. Sixteen people died, after being trapped under the wreckage while others clung to the banisters on the top side.

2010 **Chobe Linyandi System on prosed List of UNESCO World Heritage sites**

On the 27th May **2010**, the Botswana government through the Department of National Museum and Monuments included the Chobe Linyanti System in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage list. The Chobe Linyanti System comprises the Linyanti River in the north and the Chobe National Park in the east.

The Chobe National Park in northwest Botswana has one of the largest game concentrations on the African continent and is the most diverse park in Botswana. It covers an area of 11,700 square kilometres and by size, is the third-largest park in the country, after the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and the Gemsbok National Park.[43]

2011 The Nation Census of 2011 - population of Chobe was 23,347 (5089) which represented a 27.9% increase from 2001.

211 **The KAZA TFCA is established**

The Chobe district is part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) that spans five southern African countries: Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The KAZA TFCA was formally established on 18th of August 2011 when the Heads of States of the five governments signed its Treaty in Luanda, Angola, during the SADC Summit for Heads of States.

2014 **Kasane/Kazungula integrated tourism strategy produced by Botswana Tourism.**

The strategy's objectives are to present key tourism development challenges as well as develop strategies that can be utilised to strategically position the area in the KAZA region to derive maximum benefit from tourism.

2019 **Kasane/Kazungula Redevelopment Plan approved and gazetted.**

The plan presents the conceptual and development frameworks for the redevelopment of the area into a renowed tourism hub.

2019 Seperu listed by UNESCO

In 2019 Seperu folk dance and associated practices (singing, dancing, and sacred rituals that are highly significant in the lives of Vekuhane community members) were inscribed in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.[44]

Seperu dancers

2021 Opening of Kazungula Bridge

On May 10, **2021** the 923 metre Kazungula bridge across the Zambezi, linking the towns of Kazungula Zambia and Botswana, was opened for traffic. In August 2007 the governments of Zambia and Botswana announced a deal to construct a bridge to replace the existing ferry. Construction of the USD 259.3 million project, which includes international border facilities in Zambia and Botswana, officially began in October 2014. The bridge features a single-line railway track between two traffic lanes and pavements for pedestrians, which in future is expected to be connected to a railway running from Mosetse to Livingstone.

Kazungula bridge

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